

*David A. Richardson v. Stanley Works, Inc.*

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## INNOVATORS



### THE TOOL-DOCTORS ARE ON CALL

The first time Jimmy Addison remembers thinking that the world needed a new breed of hammer, he was on a construction site in Texas, doing what he does for a living: talking to a construction worker. The guy was semi-successfully using the claw of a hammer to twist a 2x4 warped by the summer humidity. He sure wished his hammer did a better job at it, he said. Addison wrote that down.

Addison is about six and a half feet tall. He's pushing 300 pounds, has a cast-iron handshake and an easy smile. He works the Southern and Western U.S. for Stanley's Discovery Team, an arm of the 150-year-old tool company's R&D department. Discovery Team members spend most of their time in the field, talking to workers about how their tools could be improved. "When I'm on a job site and I hear some rough language," Addison says, "well, that's where our next tool is coming from."

Along with Addison, the team includes Kellie Fenton, an industrial engineer who previously researched new kinds of metal for the steel industry. She covers the Eastern U.S., and Wendy Maes handles Europe. They report to Paul Wechsler, a.k.a. "Numbers," who keeps track of test results, customer surveys and information on what's selling where. When the team finds that there's a real need for a new or redesigned tool, they work with Stanley designers to create one.

Case in point: the hammer, which is rarely used to drive nails these days. "Pros all have pneumatic nailers," says Fenton, explaining why the team reconfigured the trusty old tool. Yet hammers are often used for demolition, something they were never designed for. So the team gave their proto-tool an oversized, sledgehammer-esque head. Then they

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flattened out the shaft under the striking face to rip even bigger gashes into drywall. But because demolition is about more than putting holes in walls—there's usually a lot of wood to be ripped out—designers relocated the crow's foot from opposite the striking face to the bottom of the handle and replaced it with a set of fixed jaws scaled to grab the most common sizes of wood found in homes.

After about 18 months of back and forth, the FUBAR, whose name means functional utility bars, was on the shelves. Now the Discovery team is back to doing what it does best: running toward the sounds of profanity on job sites around the world.

—Joe Brown

## THIS INNOVATOR'S PRODUCT



Evil son of the hammer



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